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Parties and the Cabinet System in Japan. The Japanese political crisis of recent months is no new development. It rather forms a link in the long chain of political struggle that has time and again been waged since the opening of the imperial diet in 1890. It is, in fact, the conflict between two schools of political thought, each contending for mastery in practical politics.

One of these schools is well represented by Marquis Okuma. When the marquis resigned the premiership last autumn on account of old age, he recommended to the emperor as his successor Viscount Kato, foreign minister in his cabinet and leader of the Kenseikai, which commanded at that time a workable majority in the lower house. In doing so, Marquis Okuma was acting upon the principle of which he has so long been an ardent advocate, that the government should be operated under a party system, as is the English. The contention of this school is, in brief, that as the emperor has granted to the people the constitution with the avowed object of ruling the country in conformity with their wishes, the ministry appointed to carry out the imperial will should logically be chosen from among those statesmen who enjoy the confidence not only of the emperor but also of the people. In other words, this school advocates that the cabinet should be formed in major part, if not entirely, by the leaders of the party which has the majority in the imperial diet. This majority party in the diet, however, amounts in practice to the majority party in the lower house, for the upper house has not yet incorporated into its organization any well-defined political parties. Moreover, the house of representatives is elected directly by the people, whereas the major part of the house of peers is composed of the appointees of the throne.

The recommendation of Marquis Okuma as to his successor was not accepted by the emperor, who followed the advice of another group of "Elder Statesmen" by appointing Count Terauchi to the premiership. Thereupon the Terauchi cabinet was organized, with the program of a non-party cabinet and administration conducted by the best intellects of the united nation. The statesmen now in power are

strongly opposed to the party system of government. And the fact that they hold today the reins of government is sufficient to prove that, while the school of liberal thought may be yearly gaining strength its rival still constitutes a very powerful factor in the political arena of Japan. To this school belong some of the ablest and most widely experienced statesmen who have in the past played conspicuous parts in the upbuilding of modern Japan, and, consequently, enjoy the confidence of the emperor and command the respect of the nation. Their views with regard to this constitutional point are explained by the present premier in these words:

"Party government has no place in the constitution of Japan. . . . I presume our opponents in the lower house of parliament introduced their want of confidence resolution in January with an idealistic ambition to form a party government for Japan. But in Japan we must guide our political acts according to the clauses of the imperial constitution. . . . According to it, the appointment of ministers rests entirely with the sovereign power of his majesty, the emperor, and no other power has any right to interfere with this function. Any resolution passed by the lower house simply expresses the opinion of the house. The two houses (house of representatives and house of peers) are equal in authority and independent one of the other. Nothing is so absurd as to argue that a ministry that has not the support of the largest political party in the lower house has no footing at all in the parliament itself. In England a party cabinet is headed by the leader of the party commanding the majority in the house of commons; but not so under the imperial constitution of Japan. To insist on such a principle is to encroach on the sovereign power of the emperor. It means, also, destruction of the present organization of our two-chambered parliament."

The whole issue hinges upon the construction put on the spirit and letter of the constitution. The framers of the Japanese constitution, whose guiding spirit was Prince Ito, showed most clearly their wisdom, sagacity, and foresight in the provision they made for the formation of the cabinet. The text of the constitution relating to the subject, if read literally, would mean, as Count Terauchi says, that the ministers take their mandate from the throne, not from parliament, and that their tenure of office depends solely on the will of the emperor. But there is ambiguity in the clause, for it neither admits nor denies the principle of parliamentary mandates. The course Prince Ito and Prince Katsura pursued after the parliamentary system was put into

working order would go to prove that the framers of the constitution labored under no illusion as to the inevitable outcome of their work. Both of these great statesmen, on retiring from their premierships, proceeded to organize political parties under their leadership. It can, therefore, be reasonably presumed that, while those statesmen were fully aware that party cabinets would be an essential outcome of representative institutions—that to some kind of party cabinets Japan must some day come—they were at the same time determined that such a momentous step should be taken very cautiously and gradually. At the time the constitution was framed there existed no political parties competent to form cabinets, and the leaders of such parties as existed were mostly untrained and inexperienced men simply clamouring for power. So the Meiji statesmen found in the throne the sheet-anchor to hold secure the ship of state in troubled waters, and considered the imperial mandate clause a conservative safeguard, pending the organization and education of parties worthy to be entrusted with governmental responsibilities. A few years of parliamentary experience, however, revealed that a cabinet unsupported by strong political parties is virtually impotent for law-making, and even for administrative purposes. For the opposition in the lower house, if commanding a majority, could by sheer obstruction prevent the voting of the budget and other legislative measures.

The history of various ministries formed since 1890, ranging from a cabinet that stood completely aloof from political parties to a cabinet entirely controlled by the leaders of the majority party in the lower house, is the history of a series of experiments to find the way to adjust the principle of the imperial mandate and that of parliamentary mandate, so as to ensure the smooth working of the constitution and safeguard the welfare of the nation. The days of experiment are not yet over.

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Antecedents of the Russian Revolution. The resignation, in the summer of 1916, of the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Sergei Sazonov, was keenly regretted as well within Russia as among her allies. It had been generally interpreted, as a mere result of differences between the talented and influential minister on one side, and the governing group on the other, with respect to the immediate attitude to be taken towards the future independence of Poland. However, the subse-